



Cyngor Cyllido Addysg
Uwch Cymru
Higher Education Funding
Council for Wales

hefcw

**Arfer micro-
gymwysterau:
polisi a
safbwyntiau o
wledydd y DU**

Dydd Mawrth 21 Mai 2024

**Micro-credential
practice:
Policy and
perspectives from
the UK's nations**

Tuesday 21 May 2024



Micro-credentials Policy and Progress in Wales

Croeso

Professor Laura Roberts

Swansea University / Prifysgol Abertawe

Micro-credential practice: policy and perspectives from the UK's nations

Micro-credentials Wales policy major milestones

Wales: actively exploring and implementing policies related to MCs as part of broader strategies for education, skills, and workforce enhancement.

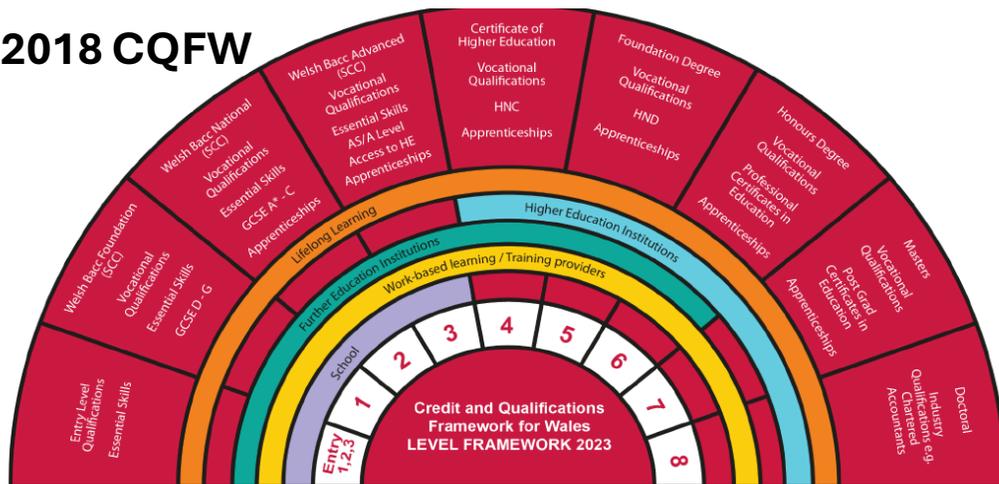
Currently no policies explicitly focus on MCs,

Welsh Gov been supportive of initiatives aimed at increasing the accessibility and relevance of MCs in alignment with the **Lifelong Learning Strategy**

The Learning and Skills Act (2000):

Statutory framework for **lifelong learning**. Welsh Govt Duty to promote lifelong learning, outlining provisions for adult learning, FE, and training.

2018 CQFW



2017: Adult learning Wales Policy

A Wales where learning is at the core of all we do; where participation in learning is encouraged and rewarded; and where people have equal opportunities to gain the skills for life

- **Fair and Equitable, Quality Assured, Funded fairly, Local**
- **Essential, digital and employable skills, ‘hook’ courses**

Hefcw's role in supporting microcredentials has been predominantly through its funding and regulatory functions, aligning with its broader objectives of promoting innovation, excellence, and accessibility in higher education.

2021 Supporting the Welsh Lifelong Learning System Report: Centre for Public Policy
Outlining support for LL.
- Vision, roles, rights, barriers, responsibilities, increasing participation

2021 Our national mission: high standards and aspirations for all (Welsh Gov)
A roadmap that sets out how our existing education policies and commitments relate to one another.

Cylchlythyr | Circular

Call for proposals to develop micro-credentials

Date: 13 July 2021
Reference: W21/23HE
To: Heads of universities in Wales

hefcw

Institute of Coding Skills Bootcamps

Looking to upskill, reskill or retrain? Check out our collection of Skills Bootcamps. They are **entirely free** for learners and will help you build your tech skills. We are working across all universities in Wales to deliver these skills both virtually and in-person. Details of courses delivered in Bangor University, Cardiff Metropolitan University, Wrexham Glyndwr University, University of South Wales, Aberystwyth University, University of Wales Trinity St David, Cardiff University and the Open University will be announced soon!

These professional development short courses are designed to help you build in-demand skills and knowledge to help you get ahead.

institute of
CODING
in wales technocamps

Developing Micro-credentials: Cardiff Metropolitan University report to HEFCW

Aberystwyth and Bangor Business and Marketing

UWTSD , Bangor and USW collaboration

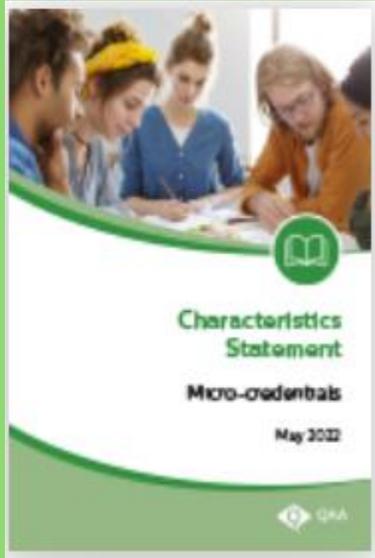


Swansea University
Prifysgol Abertawe

2022: QAA MC Character Statement

Context and purpose of MCs and the characteristics of the learner:

- admissions and access (including RPL)
- course design, including learning, teaching and assessment
- certification
- quality management.



Rec 23: That Qualifications Wales works with stakeholders to produce vocational qualification 'route maps'.

View that vocational qualifications take too long. Need to be able to provide qualifications in smaller 'bite size' chunks. Awarding bodies can offer 'micro-credentials', digital badges, etc



Cylchlythyr | Circular

HEFCW part-time undergraduate fee waiver scheme 2022/23

hefcw

Date: 26 August 2022
Reference: W22/30HE
To: Heads of funded higher education providers in Wales
Principals of directly-funded further education colleges in Wales
Response by: 14 December 2022 to hestats@hefcw.ac.uk (IRIS data)

- registered, as a new entrant 2022/23 or continuing, on a programme obtaining a recognised UG HE qualification;
- or a course, module or unit (including micro-credential provision) which enables credit to be obtained towards a recognised UG HE qualification.

This document is published in English and Welsh



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- Facts and figures
- Sector guidance
- Frameworks
- Student support
- Student engagement
- Main challenges

Micro-credentials

Practice in the Higher Education Sector in Wales

December 2023

https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/about-us/micro-credentials-practice-in-the-higher-education-sector-in-wales.pdf?sfvrsn=ad3b381_4#:~:text=in%20the%20future,-_Micro%2Dcredentials%20in%20Wales%3A%20Facts%20and%20figures.credentials%20in%20the%20near%20future.



Cardiff Metropolitan University

Prifysgol Metropolitan Caerdydd

Micro-credential Planning Framework

Technical summary document

October 2023

Steven Osborne, Cardiff Metropolitan University

A HEFCW-funded QAA Cymru Collaborative Enhancement Project



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Council for Wales



Dadansoddi ar gyfer Polisi
YMCHWIL GYMRITHASOL Y LLYWODRAETH
GSR
GOVERNMENT SOCIAL RESEARCH
Analysis for Policy



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

SOCIAL RESEARCH NUMBER:
111/2023
PUBLICATION DATE:
05/12/2023

Review of the Skills System in Wales: Initial and continuing vocational education and training programmes

- MC mentioned 23 times
- Highlight flexibility
- Some concerns over bureaucracy and sustainability in the HE sector

Full Research Report: Ravenhall, M. and Woodhouse, J. (2023). *Review of the Skills System in Wales: Initial and continuing vocational education and training programmes*. Cardiff: Welsh Government, GSR report number 111/2023. Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/review-skills-system-wales-initial-and-continuing-vocational-education-and-training-programmes>

Current Micro-credential Offering in Wales

1872 PRIFYSGOL
ABERYSTWYTH
UNIVERSITY

BM37005 Business to Business marketing: Improving Business Networks

BM37105 Business to Consumer Relationship Development and Customer Experience

BM37205 Marketing Management

BM37305 Marketing Planning

BMM5005 Project management Techniques

BMM5105 Quality and Six Sigma Systems

BMM5205 Lean and Industrial Energy Management

BMM5305 Supply Chain and Logistics Systems

institute of **CODING**
in wales technocamps

Introduction to Python Programming 30th May

Linux Essentials On-going

Fundamentals of Cybersecurity On-going

Python 1

Introduction to Databases

Imperative Programming Foundations

Machine Learning

Educational Technologies

Interacting with Data

Creative Coding

Computational Thinking

Intro to Video Game Design

Our Courses **NOW**
NET ZERO WALES SKILLS

Introduction to Fossil Free Steelmaking Environmental Impact and Sustainability

Introduction to Circular Economy Introduction to Electric Vehicles

Renewable Energy Technologies & Infrastructure Sustainable Transport and Mobility

Coleg Gŵyr Abertawe
Gower College Swansea

Home School Leavers Adult Learners Apprenticeships

Home > Courses > Part-time > Microcredential In Green Roofs

Microcredential in Green Roofs

 **The Open University**

Business management
Digital Technologies
Photography
Climate change
Education

PRIFYSGOL
BANGOR
UNIVERSITY

**MICRO-CREDENTIAL:
SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP IN
EDUCATION 1 – MAKING THE
CHANGE**

**MICRO-CREDENTIAL:
INFECTION PREVENTION 1**

**MICRO-CREDENTIAL:
INFECTION PREVENTION 2**

 **Cardiff Metropolitan University** | Prifysgol Metropolitan Caerdydd

DEVELOP MACHINE LEARNING MODELS WITHOUT EXTENSIVE CODING KNOWLEDGE

LEARN TO USE VISUALISATIONS AND EXPLAINABLE AI METHODS

 **Prifysgol Cymru**
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Computing
Linux Essentials (ACCA4037)

Computing
Introduction to Cybersecurity

Policy and position summary

Position

- Growing interest and development across Wales
- 7 are currently offering micro-credentials, 3 are planning to develop, 2 have no plans to develop micro-credentials in the near future
- Many offer short credit and non-credit courses
- Range of modules sizes, topics, delivery methods
- Some pan-University activity and some HE/FE partnerships

Policy

- No one overarching policy supporting Micro-credentials in Wales
- QAA Character Statement 2022 is really the main quality assurance benchmark
- No consistent credit alignment between or delivery method
- Internal approaches to stacking qualifications only
- No common agreed quality assurance mechanisms
- No common agreed transcript or digital certificate
- No common agreed portability process
- No agreement on fees, no loan entitlement
- Fee waivers for 30 credits per year, not fully capitalized on by providers

On-going barriers

- No one overarching policy supporting Micro-credentials in Wales
- Internal systems and processes: Enrolments, fees, admission, marketing,
- Sustainability: Limited seed-funding, un-viable continuous delivery

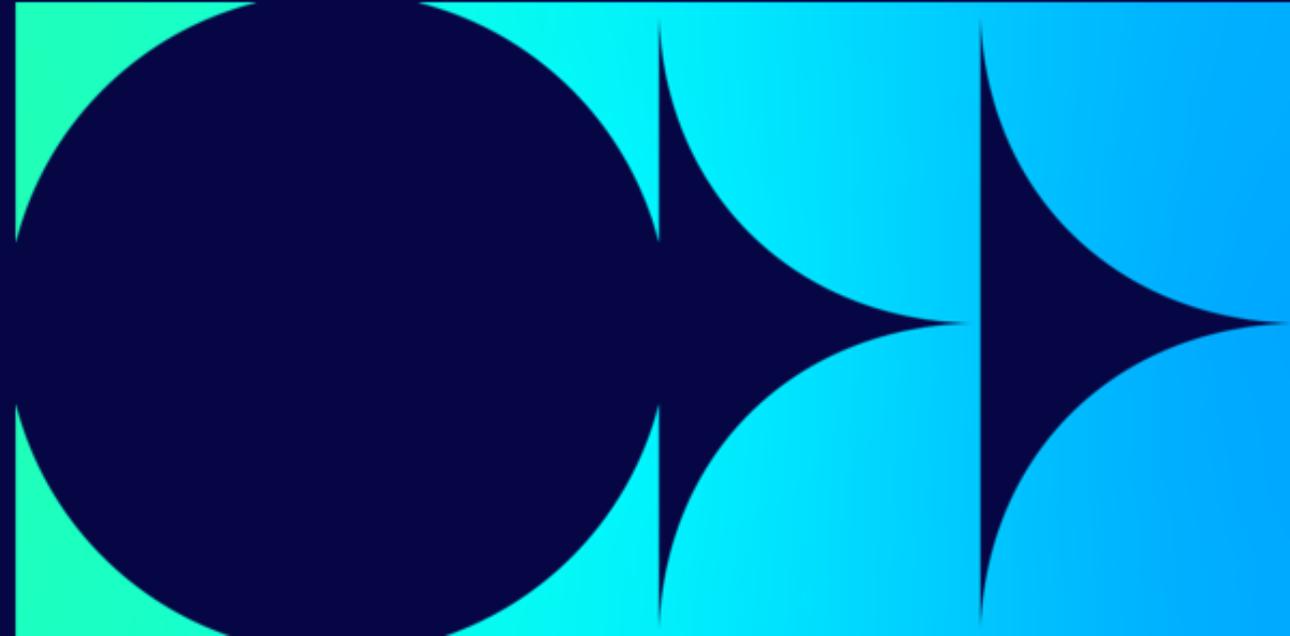
Microcredentials in Northern Ireland

Micro-credential practice: policy and perspectives from the UK's nations

Michael Bower

Chair, Microcredential Working Group (NI)

21 May 2024



Context for microcredentials in Northern Ireland

No formal policy position from the Dept for the Economy

Microcredential Working Group established - Universities, FE Colleges and Teaching Colleges all represented.

Limited microcredential offer in place:

- Ulster University using in widening participation partnership activity
- Professional body certificates in FE Colleges
- Open University microcredentials (not Northern Ireland specific)

Significant adult learning fund for upskilling/reskilling activity from 2021 – 2024: “Skill Up”

- Levels 1 – 7
- Provision had to carry formal credit

Significant microcredential investment in the Republic of Ireland – “MicroCreds”

- Govt funding for course infrastructure and to offset fee costs to learners

Microcredential Working Group – Northern Ireland

POINTS OF CONSENSUS

1. The primary audience for microcredentials will be those who are currently in the workforce who want to upskill.
2. Microcredentials could be an important vehicle for enabling employers to address organisational skills gaps.
3. Stackability of microcredentials is not seen as the initial priority.
4. There should be a consistent approach to the definition of a microcredential in Northern Ireland and a clear and simple offer across institutions aligning to one framework.
5. Government investment will be key to greater uptake of microcredentials.
6. There should be a microcredential brand for Northern Ireland.
7. The initial focus should be on reframing existing provision towards being a microcredential offer rather than starting from scratch.
8. The microcredential offer must have currency both across Ireland and across the rest of the UK.
9. Accessibility should be at the heart of microcredentials.

Microcredential Working Group – Northern Ireland

POINTS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

1. The role of academic credit – necessary or not?
2. Is a microcredential offer sustainable in the absence of significant government funding?
3. Who determines what is/isn't a microcredential?
4. FE's awarding powers and validation arrangements in the context of microcredentials.
5. Develop deeper understanding and learning from the Republic of Ireland's microcredential activity.



**The Open
University**

Ireland



Microcredentials,
LLE and higher
technical skills

- **Model at Staffordshire University**
 - ERDF to SPF
 - Transitions
 - Notional credits
 - Challenge of end point assessment
- **Who are they for and how are they supported**
 - Complexity = cost/resource
 - How deliver alongside BAU
- **Employer engagement**
 - ‘Professional behaviours’
 - Not training



LLE and a
place-based
approach

- **Employers**
- **The LSIP**
- **Bridging L1 to L4 to
create opportunities via
LLE**
- **Financial mechanisms**

Scottish Micro – Credential Network

Policy and Practices

Jon Buglass
Vice Principal, Edinburgh College
Co-Chair of the Scottish MCN



What has been happening?

- June 2021: SFC National Review - Scottish Funding Council – Coherent and Refreshed Tertiary approach to Skills Planning, including Micro-Credentials, with a single Quality framework (QAA)
- Enhance access to shorter, targeted courses that support lifelong learning
- Pilot a National Micro-Credential Framework and Delivery Plan to certify bite-sized learning and explore how modules may be combined to form larger qualifications over time.

What has been happening?

Scottish Tertiary Education Network for Micro-credentials
2021-2023

- Established a Scottish central point for advice, guidance, discussion and expertise regarding the sector understanding and delivery of micro-credentials and small qualifications
- Developed and published a glossary of terminology in relation to micro-credentials and small qualifications
- Discussed, disseminated and promoted models of practice for effective partnerships in the delivery of micro-credentials
- Worked to agree and plan the development of resources for the Scottish Sector in relation to the design delivery and quality assurance of micro-credentials in Scotland
- Evaluated the evidence from survey analysis, state of the nation report and collaborative cluster findings and those from wider afield to understand the status of the design, delivery and quality assurance of micro-credentials and small qualifications
- Investigated current knowledge, understanding and terminology in respect of micro-credentials within the tertiary sector was circulated in November 2021 within the survey
- A state of the nation 'scan' was undertaken in autumn 2021 to review the current micro-credentials on offer in Scotland and the ease with which prospective students could access this information directly from HEI websites. A summary of the findings from this scan were presented at the first meeting to inform discussion.
- Findings from the collaborative cluster project were published on the Enhancement Themes website and can be accessed [here](#).

What has been happening?

- The first meeting of the Scottish Tertiary Education Network for Micro-Credentials was held on 30 January 2024;
- QAA Glossary [Scottish Tertiary Education Micro-Credentials Glossary \(qaa.ac.uk\)](#)
- Joint chairs appointed
- 3 workstreams: Employers, Students, Institutions, with Communication a golden thread
- The role of SCQF in credit rating reinforced
- International and rUK perspectives: [Find your next course on MicroCred Seeker: start learning now](#)

The perspective of Scottish universities

Hot topics:

- Stackability and transferability question remains complex
- The size of a micro-credential
- Funding for upskilling uncertain
- Linkage of RPL/M-C with Graduate Apprenticeships

The perspective of Scottish Colleges

Hot topics:

- Opportunities to stack using the FE NQ funding framework
- SCQF Framework examples
- Tremendous opportunity to support upskilling –2000+ courses which are not ‘M-Cd’
- Funding for upskilling uncertain, FWDF/ Employer partnerships
- Quality support role becomes crucial
- SCP; Employers, Staff CPD example (Creative and Critical Thinking)